

# DHSS Receives Medicaid Substance Use Disorder Waiver from Federal Government

*DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker says, "In the midst of the opioid crisis we are facing in Delaware and across the country, (these facilities) are another resource we can use to better serve our Medicaid clients in need of treatment for substance use disorder."*

NEW CASTLE (Aug. 5, 2019) – The Department of Health and Social Services received approval recently from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for a waiver amendment allowing DHSS to use federal Medicaid funding for addiction-related treatment of individuals in substance use disorder (SUD) treatment facilities known as IMDs.

Delaware was the 25th state to receive approval of the SUD waiver by CMS. Previously, federal Medicaid funds could not be used to pay for addiction-related services at IMDs (institutions for mental disease) for individuals ages 21 to 64. Before the waiver, Delaware's Medicaid program used state funds to pay for addiction-related services provided to Medicaid clients at IMDs. There are four IMDs in Delaware that provide addiction-related services: SUN Behavioral Delaware near Georgetown; Dover Behavioral Health in Dover; MeadowWood Behavioral Health near New Castle; and Rockford Center near Newark.

The IMD exclusion, which prohibits the use of federal Medicaid funds for care provided to most patients in mental health and substance use disorder residential treatment facilities with more than 16 beds, had been part of Medicaid since its enactment in 1965. Delaware's waiver applies only to addiction-related services for Medicaid clients.

“We are grateful to CMS for granting us this waiver,” said DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker, a practicing family physician. “In the midst of the opioid crisis we are facing in Delaware and across the country, the IMDs are another resource we can use to better serve our Medicaid clients in need of treatment for substance use disorder.”

DHSS’ Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA) also received approval from CMS for an extension of its Medicaid demonstration project, Diamond State Health Plan, along with its SUD waiver amendment. Both approvals are effective from Aug. 1, 2019, through Dec. 31, 2023.

“We are very pleased to have approval of our demonstration waiver and the added SUD expenditure authority,” Delaware Medicaid Director Steve Groff said. “This will allow all Medicaid beneficiaries in Delaware to have access to high-quality SUD care.”

-30-

*The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of life of Delaware’s citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations.*